

VISUAL INTERVENTIONS IN COLLAPSING STATES:  
PRACTICES, SPACES, SUBJECTS

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A thesis submitted to the faculty at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Russian and East European Studies.

Chapel Hill  
2014

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## ABSTRACT

Adnan Džumhur: Visual Interventions in Collapsing States: Practices, Spaces, Subjects  
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This thesis presents a framing for analyzing forms of visual interventions by international photojournalists, documentary photographers, and filmmakers during the collapse of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union (with the focus on Russia) in the 1990s. The framing rests on the distinction between mobile and inert subjects to open new venues for discussions about subjects, spaces, and subjectivity in documentary practice during collapsing political and social order. This thesis defines the terms and effects of mobile/inert subject encounters around the interdisciplinary categories of positionality, mobility, and visibility. It makes the case that these encounters need to be traced to their material locations and practices in order to present a competing range of objectives and priorities with which to interpret visual evidence of social and political precarity in the 1990s.

## PREFACE

On November 8, 2009, I traveled to Los Angeles to interview the renowned translator and professor of Slavic literature Michael Henry Heim for a short documentary film. We discussed his translations of Milan Kundera's work and, more broadly, the relations among history, place, memory, and language in the context of East Europe's recent past. The day after our interview, I attended a public gathering organized by the Wende Museum to mark the twentieth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. Envisioning it largely as a PR event for the museum, the organizers invited local artists to paint several segments of the original Wall that were brought to LA for the occasion and installed at a prominent intersection on the Wilshire Boulevard, opposite the impressive Los Angeles County Museum of Arts. According to the organizers, the installation, dubbed *The Wall Project*, was supposed to "replicate the Berlin Wall's function as a site for political and personal expression, through reproducing elements of the art and creativity that it once inspired."<sup>1</sup>

As I watched attendees carefully encircling the decorated slabs of concrete, some bearing freshly painted portraits of Kennedy and Reagan, excerpts from Kundera's novel *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, that Heim had read for the camera a day before, echoed in my head. It seemed as if this event was opening up a space for deliberations on historical memory. Yet the format and the setting demanded that the memory, with experiences that support it, be articulated with a triumphant and positivist idiom of change. This is a frequent dilemma among the characters in Kundera's novels (and the author's own): how to convey the substance of

historical experience without resorting to generalizations and the banal? For Kundera's characters, who are always meeting half-way between home and exile, the shared lexicon does not correspond to the same frame of cultural or historical references. What is often lost in translation is the spatial dimension of historical experience. I realize now that it was at this event that the idea for this thesis first started to sprout. It was there that I, too, struggled to find either historical or aesthetic referents for conveying my experience of what I was seeing. For me, as a first time visitor to the city, however, the spatial dimension was connected primarily to movement, movement through a particular geography (that of Los Angeles) that demanded I tease out those missing referents.

Among a variety of modes of creative expression, literature and film contribute significantly to the production of place. For outsiders, Berlin today represents the idea of an authentic place with an authentic past, largely manufactured as an image for consumption by the city's tourist industry. The remnants of the Berlin Wall, whether in Berlin or Los Angeles, are artefacts of historical kitsch, as Kundera might bemoan, permanently fixed in time and apparently adaptable to a variety of commemorative settings. Shortly after I had returned from Los Angeles, I encountered an artistic intervention that offered an actual possibility for untangling my impressions of the "Wall experience." It came in form of a short documentary film that is essentially structured around movement through today's Berlin, this was Cynthia Beatt's *The Invisible Frame*.

In a span of twenty years the director 'traveled' twice the 160-km-long border that split the city into West and East Berlin. The first time, a year before the collapse of the Berlin Wall, Beatt and the actress Tilda Swinton cycled along the perimeter of the Wall with the intention of capturing an introspective view of West Berlin while imagining the other half of the city and its

surroundings. In the 2009 sequel of sorts, Beatt and Swinton journeyed through a changed landscape on both sides of the former border. In what Beatt calls “a choreography of cyclist and camera” or the visual intertwining of west and east, she seems to be discovering a sense of liberation: “I needed to transpose the choreography of sound, text and movement that I held in my imagination, to make it real. The film went its own way and became something that I didn’t consciously set out to make. ... The essence is there and somehow deeply familiar, but the result is still surprising.” In both instances, Beatt is not really concerned with documenting the place in a particular order or with specific intention in mind. As she puts it, “if you look closely there is a lot to see, but it is not easy to define or to put words to. It was instinctive ghost work.”<sup>2</sup>

In their second journey, the duo captures more than the changed face of a city and the absence of forced division - they turn the space along the former dividing line into a place for experimentation, generative of a different kind of remembering. By renewing their journey, Beatt and Swinton consciously avoid taking possession of history. Instead of focusing on the historical circumstances that lead to the second journey, the two act on a creative impulse to bridge the two experiences, alerting the audiences to the variety of processes in which history can be represented. The film shows the impossibility of an experience at one place and time retaining authority over subsequent ones.

What Beatt’s particular approach to place as a historical subject helped me understand was that the remnants of the Berlin Wall in Los Angeles, with their “imported” symbolic valance, claimed a particular narrative. It is a kind of narrative that limits the possibility for aesthetic attempts to address the present in a hybrid of historiographical and ethnographical forms, as Beatt does in her film. The point that she stresses in her film is of narratives that emerge from specific sites and times of production, narratives that come with their own form,

and thus manage to refine our perception of a place while sustaining a genuine uncertainty. Beatt's effort, as it turns out, had been preceded by those of numerous documentary filmmakers and photographers who intervened at different stages in the 1990s Eastern Europe. Most of them didn't seek authenticity in *a story*, but rather in artistic expression; frequently challenging the established notions of the documentary format, although their work remains classified as such. It was through these works that my thinking from the Los Angeles' "Wall event," found its shape and purpose in the thesis before you.

Lastly, having emphasized the value of deliberation above, this preface wouldn't be complete without a reference to my intellectual base - the interdisciplinary field of Russian and East European studies. The very origin of area studies in the academy reflects the influence of politics on the production of knowledge. And while the standard idiom of area studies (in this case Eastern Europe, etc.) remains lodged within traditional definitions of territory and geopolitical space, it nonetheless provides a ground for opening up these concepts to reformulation, to accept them for what they are: as constantly changing. In that sense, interacting with a variety of analytical nodes that migrate between disciplines is bound to both challenge and confuse the reader's and my own assumptions about East Europe. To take a lead from the cultural anthropologist James Clifford, in the perspective of this thesis, location is an itinerary rather than something concrete – "a series of encounters and translations." I hope that the analytical and historical hybridity adapted in this thesis will presents a path for engagement with East Europe that stretches beyond the limits and norms of strictly academic pursuits and area studies as such.

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## INTRODUCTION

Many scholars, writers, and artists responded to the twentieth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall with an emphasis on the circularity and complexity of differences not just in the recollections of the event, but also in regards to the present socio-political realities in the former ‘Eastern Europe.’<sup>3</sup> Images were at the center of renewed discussions, reminiscences, performances and exhibits. Excerpts from monumental TV coverage were replayed on television alongside films commissioned specifically for the occasion. Walter Benjamin’s notion of the image as a source in which “Then [*das Gewesene*] and the Now [*das Jetzt*] come into constellation like a flash of lightning” spoke for how this event was remembered twenty years later.

At the same time, the occasion highlighted a lack of attempts to theorize post-communist space on the basis of visual evidence produced in the 1990s. In this thesis, I introduce an analytical framing that would allow media and visual culture scholars to revisit the forms of visual interventions during the collapse of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union in the 1990s. That conceptual framing rests on the distinction of *inert* and *mobile* subjects – a distinction that insists on both material and discursive aspects of visual interventions. I define visual interventions as the body of work produced by international photojournalist, documentary photographers and documentary filmmakers during the collapse of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union (with the focus on Russia).<sup>4</sup>

The definition of the *mobile/inert* subjects configuration will require a lot more detail. Principally, the image-producers discussed in this paper are defined as *mobile* subjects by the nature of their profession (photo journalist, documentary photographers and filmmakers) and by the deliberate emphasis on movement and transience in their work. The people in their images are the *inert* subjects. At first, this may seem like a fairly arbitrary distinction. However, by foregrounding the notion of *inert* and *mobile* subjects in the definition of visual interventions, I seek to expand the focus from discursive/semiotic (that what is in the image) to the material facets of such configurations in the everyday geography – this includes a focus on spaces that accommodate encounters of *mobile* and *inert* subjects, in both public and private realm: streets, homes, workplaces, etc. Therefore, the way *mobile* and *inert* subjects relate to material spaces they occupy, their knowledge of it, use of it, and movement within it, is central to how I define these subjects in the first place. Here abstractions such as political violence or poverty become more than categories of debate and deliberation; they are situated in the realm of lived experience.

The space of a filmed or photographed encounter (for all its political, cultural, and aesthetic resonances) extends beyond the mere visual record and the meaning ascribed to either the image or the encounter. Its materiality is found in a range of engagements through technological and logistical capabilities.<sup>5</sup> For the *mobile* subject, deliberations connected to movement generate a variety of questions: what is the reason for the journey, what will be the itinerary, what the departure point and the final destination, what obstacles may be encountered along the way? The *mobile* subject also contemplates the means of movement, accommodations, and the costs of it all. These deliberations are already establishing relations between here and there, mapping movement before it occurs, etc. In other words, *mobile* subjects construct spaces

in their imagination first, but those spaces become active only through movement. In that sense, *mobile* subjects aren't principally defined by their capacity to move freely, to explore and discover, although that is implied in the very term. They typically have some sort of preconceived notions of places they visit, and possess the technological ability to visually appropriate spaces through which they move. They are able of representing their journeys, but limited in time and possibilities in exploring new places and engaging with the people they meet.

*Mobile* subjects are capable of capturing alienation and strangeness, security and danger, which movement brings to their awareness. For *mobile* subjects, the space between here and there is measured in different ways, but always recognized as a distance, a gap between two points that defines their own curiosities, apprehensions, and creativity. The *mobile* subject, unlike its counterpart in the *inert* subject it pursues, has the privilege of asking 'what am I actually doing here, why, and for whom?' It seems perpetually caught up in the crisis of self-definition. This means that the *mobile* subject, unlike the *inert* subject, is in the position to both seek and also to negate, exaggerate, and romanticize strangeness, if desired.

To illustrate this point with an example, many of the encounters in the war zone between photographers and filmmakers and their subjects happen by chance. An injured person, for instance, is often unaffected by the presence of the camera: after all, they have more important things to worry about than being photographed or filmed. For those with the camera, however, the encounter carries a lot more significance, largely because as *mobile* subjects they are constantly faced with the question of how to conduct themselves within the geography of physical precarity. In other words, the *mobile* subject depends on the *inert* subject as it constitutes a space for its activity and as it immerses itself within a complex web of both social relations and ethical conundrums (e.g., is taking a picture of a wounded person more important

than helping that person not bleed to death?). The result of these encounters is how each subject forms subjectivity in relation to the other and on what political, social, and ethical grounds. Ultimately, throughout my discussion subjectivity will crystalize as a process that brings into play the ideas of relations, proximities, and obligations to others.

*Inert* subjects, on the other hand, are not just restricted in movement. Their real limits of influence are manifested in media discourses of post-communist transitions. If discourses of post-communist state unraveling attest to how collective and individual experience and agency are being negotiated and understood at a precarious moment in history, their other utility is in circumscribing post-communist space by mobilizing vision to create meaning and significance. For instance, the photojournalists who covered the wars in Bosnia and Kosovo sought to demonstrate the credibility of war and their experience in the war zone with a disproportionate focus on the victimized bodies: the murdered, the mutilated, the expelled. As it is often the case in war reporting, journalistic credibility depended on rhetorical sensationalism and the commodification of suffering.<sup>6</sup> This demands that the *inert* subject be seen in a particular setting and circumstances to maintain its “truth-value.” The *inert* subject was thus fixed within a geography that in a significant way constructs its suffering and destitution. In the end, it became hard to divorce the political, economic, and ethical properties of a situation in which the *inert* subject finds itself from both public and private spaces in which it exists. For the *inert* subject, however, space isn’t just conceived as abstraction; rather, it is inscribed with both personal and emotional value.<sup>7</sup>

While scholars have already identified the ‘spectacle of crisis’ as the dominant trope in media discourses on Eastern Europe with the victimized body at its center (and more generally embodiment as a category of both geopolitical and media analysis),<sup>8</sup> I want to strike a different

approach. While I recognize the utility of the body as a metaphor, I want to introduce in its place a more accurate analytical framing. My aim is to provide a counter vantage point to the trends that personalize the geopolitics of the Cold War, and, in doing so, run the risk of abstracting a wide range of experiences into a collectively imagined and often caricatured body of a nation, a region, or an ideology. Instead, I want to emphasize a relational and multifaceted constitution of subjects (and subjectivities) that extends from local to global, and back. The critical utility of the *mobile/inert* subjects configuration will emerge in the analysis of visual engagements with the political and social “transition” in the 1990s’ Eastern Europe under the umbrella of cultural geography, visual culture, and documentary studies.

## CHAPTER 1: *MOBILE* AND *INERT* SUBJECTS IN ENCOUNTER

As I attempt to define the analytical framing of *mobile/inert* subjects, I am faced with the challenge of description and with deciding on appropriate terminology with which to move forward. As implied earlier, there is no unified body of scholarship on this topic upon which I could expand. Therefore, I rely primarily on the field of cultural geography (its feminist strand, specifically) for the discussion of subject formation both in terms of structure and agency. I organize my discussion of subjectivities and spaces around analytical nodes of positionality, mobility and visibility in the work of several prominent geographers (Rose, 1993; Creswell, 2006; Pile and Trift, 1995). By engaging with some of the key texts in the field of visual culture, I hope to connect the discussion of space and subjectivity to the production of visibilities and power relations associated with spectatorship in particular. Lastly, the writing of film scholars Russell (1993) and Nichols (1993, 1995) will provide numerous departure points for my analysis of the production of subjects and subjectivity in different documentary practices, which is at the core of the thesis. These separate theoretical strands will ultimately converge in the case-study discussion of work produced by two photojournalists Ron Haviv and Gilles Peress, the photographer Luc Delahaye, and filmmaker Chantal Akerman.

I would like to acknowledge at the outset of this chapter the diversity of experiences of post-communist societies and to emphasize that the issues discussed here do not apply to them categorically because of their shared communist past. The individual states that emerged from

the “Eastern bloc” each struck a different path for their future. Discussion of power relations, previously applied to geopolitical alliances, now center around the issues of nationalism, minority rights, economic equality, etc. within respective national borders. After all, what constitutes the former geopolitical construct “Eastern Europe” are societies of diverse linguistic and geographic backgrounds, all with their own cultural traditions that defy a uniform definition of a region. In that light, post-communist space is understood here relationally and not around fixed categories – it reflects a web of localities, both national and international.

At the same time, I don’t intend to offer a more accurate vision of post-communist space, nor do I assume that such a vision exists. More importantly, I caution against the tendency to see the wars in the former Yugoslavia at the far violent end of the post-communist transition, while placing the Czech Velvet Revolution, for instance, at its peaceful end. Hence, I refrain from the common practice of indexing the world into “zones of peace and stability” and “zones of violence and conflict”<sup>9</sup> when discussing different forms of intervention, not just visual. First, such qualification creates a false sense of distance between local and global events.<sup>10</sup> Secondly, it adopts a rigid and normative view of political and economic stability, and leads to the practice of mapping sites of conflict and violence as a way “to constrain and rationalize the limits of social and therefore bodily and perceptual contact between populations.”<sup>11</sup>

Although this is not the primary concern of this thesis, I will in my discussion of specific cases address the issue of the political agency in constituting subjects at times of political and social crises. In the context of my discussion, the crises are triggered by the collapsing state order (Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union) and characterized by uncertainty and instability in all facets of public and private life. Against the background of state dismemberment, economic collapse, and political violence, the agency of *inert* subjects is frequently defined by the ethical



contingencies of such crises. This refers primarily to the construction and representation of victimhood in different cultural and political practices and the resulting range of positions we assume in relation to victims – as advocates, interventionists, or mere spectators. On the other hand, the scholarship that has attempted to problematize “crisis as lived experience,” with all of its material facets, presents a different range of possibilities for a formation of political agency and self-constitutions of subjects (Mbembe, 2003; Mbembe and Ruitman, 1996). I will explore some of those possibilities in the subsequent discussion of the *mobile/inert* subjects’ configuration. For now, however, the relevance of “crisis as a structuring idiom” (Mbembe, 2003) can hardly be overstated when it comes to the placement of *inert* subjects in the transnational circulation of knowledge and resources, particularly through different forms of media.

As mentioned earlier, engagements with the visual evidence produced throughout the critical period of the 1990s have so far focused on the body as either scarred by political violence, poverty, or other traumas. The victimized body carries an obvious symbolic value in manifesting causes and political responsibilities for state failure and dismemberment, wars, economic chaos, and social decay.<sup>12</sup> At the same time, it illustrates the global media tendency to overexpose some sites of violence and to force ‘visibility’ on issues that are easily folded into the logic of objectification and difference. The decimated and dead bodies in Bosnia and Kosovo, as documented by many Western TV crews and photojournalists, did much to reinforce the narrative of the “bloody Balkans” and the “ancient hatreds” explanation of war.<sup>13</sup> This tendency is in part explained by the workings of global systems of media production and distribution.<sup>14</sup> However, this gives us only one side of the representational configuration in which the subjects in the picture and those behind the camera exist.

In the subsequent discussion of the types of subjectivity formed (and informed) by the image-producers, a critical dimension of cultural geography comes into play, one grounded in the phenomenological tradition that seeks connection between the self and place - one that asks, how do we experience a place through movement, for instance, and how do we build knowledge around that experience? Yet, this dimension comes with its own set of problems, and cannot be discussed separately from the notions of consent, privacy, reciprocity, and access that stem from economic and technological privileges (travel/mobility and media/technology) that are often denied or withheld from the subjects (*inert*) represented. Rose describes contingencies of space and place as something that is a constant process of renegotiation:

Space itself – and landscape and place – far from being firm foundations for disciplinary expertise and power, are insecure, precarious and fluctuating. They are destabilized both by the internal contradictions of the geographical desire to know and by the resistance of the marginalized victims of that desire. And other possibilities, other sorts of geographies, with different compulsions, desires and effects, complement and contest one another.<sup>15</sup>

To recognize the type of power relation between the subjects that is simultaneously real and imagined underlines a need for a discussion of subjectivities that are always “performed not simply *in* but *through* space”<sup>16</sup> and whose definitions ultimately depend on the spatial dimensions that constitute it. At the same time, “fixing” subjectivities with a dynamic space, as Rose defines it, presents a challenge of defining and naming reliable markers for my own discussion of the *mobile/inert* subjects’ configuration.

As a representative of the feminist strand of cultural geography, Rose offers a definition of space that upsets established hierarchies and from which multiple and conflicting subject positions could emerge. A more reliable set of pathways in “mapping the subject” in space like this is offered by a pair of geographers not too far removed from Rose’s own intellectual tradition. Surveying a vast body of literature on the constitution of the subject in critical

philosophy, literary and social theory, Steven Pile and Nigel Thrift suggest that position, movement, encounters, visibility and aesthetic/ethics each affect our understanding of the self and the world around us. For instance, the notion of encounter, as one of the co-ordinates of subjectivity, “provokes the subject into mapping subjectivity in a dual sense: the sovereign subject and the subjected subject. The bodies of these individuals become intensifying grids of meaning and power: the subject position of the one setting the frame for the meaning of the encounter with the other.”<sup>17</sup> The pathways offered by Pile and Thrift allow me to connect their discussion of subjectivity to Rose’s discussion of space with one particular spatial motif in mind, namely that of positionality.

Positionality, especially from feminist perspectives, is central to how the *mobile* and *inert* subjects are produced in both material and discursive spaces and how I will account for differences between the two. The kind of power relations that Pile and Thrift foreground in the encounter between subjects exposes a range of conceivable relations between them. At the same time, the discursive (media) space articulates a different set of relations from the ones that might exist in the physical space of the encounter. An attempt to conceive of those possible connections in the material space, however, still needs to take into consideration the conditions that inhibit similar connections in the discursive (media) space. I will illustrate this point in greater detail in the later section on visual culture (Chapter 2).

Another analytical marker that is central to the discussion on how space interacts with subjectivity is the idea of mobility itself. Within the field of cultural geography, mobility as an analytical category is discussed for its obvious material features - how people move (or don’t) through geographic space - and for its symbolic valance, how movement informs subjectivities and how the experience of movement is preserved, reproduced, and disseminated (Cresswell,

2006; Cresswell and Dixon, 2002). Cultural geographers insist on the difference between movement and mobility: “movement is rarely just movement; it carries with it the burden of meaning and it is this meaning that jumps scales.”<sup>18</sup> Further, Cresswell’s definition of mobility “as a thoroughly social facet of life imbued with meaning and power,”<sup>19</sup> along with his notion of scales, present a number of departure points for my own discussion. For instance, in the latter discussion I will focus on the power of conventions and institutions behind documentary practices to ascribe meaning to different forms of movement, both material and symbolic. Here, as throughout this work, I will underline the importance of material infrastructures and technologies that facilitate and direct movement of some people while limiting that of others. Again, Cresswell’s suggestion of “jumping scales” will be illustrated through the examples of the physical bodies (that of image-producers) as one of those scales, alongside other scales of space through which they move – landscapes, cities, streets, homes.

Several anthropologists and sociologists situate mobility within the transnational circuits of media, labor, tourism, and citizenship for instance, and the concomitant political, social, and economic processes.<sup>20</sup> Like cultural geographers, they acknowledge that mobility is a socio-cultural construct but is also grounded in materiality. The utility of their arguments for my discussion is to be found in what Schiller and Salazar have termed “the regimes of mobility.” Starting from the question on how to theorize mobility around the possibilities of movement and stasis, they propose that

[...] a study of mobilities must be able to simultaneously normalise an array of forms of mobility but not minimalise the ways in which legal status, as well as global racialising categories, can make a world of difference in terms of the ease of travel, the repercussions of trying to move, and whether or not the traveller gains or loses status from being from elsewhere [...].<sup>21</sup>

Similar to Creswell's "jumping of scales," mobility in Schiller and Salazar's view is ultimately connected with power relations within intersecting geographic scales and their implied imaginaries. Thus, the two disciplinary approaches to mobility presented so far seem to converge into the assumption that mobility fluctuates between people's dual location in physical and media environments. This doubling-of-space privileges certain subjects over others. The *inert* subject is abstracted from the topography of meaning and power that supports discursive space. As my later discussion of Peress' and Akerman's work will illustrate, images of people in motion don't invest *inert* subjects with mobility but instead draw attention to their lack of it. Peress' pictures of Bosnian refugees prove exactly that movement and mobility are not the same.

However, the *inert* subject is never quite as *inert* as it appears in the media environment - in a variety of representational dimensions, with its counterpart (the *mobile* subject) rarely in the same frame. In times of social transitions and political crises that ensue from collapsing state structures, the geographic scales become temporary sites that both the *mobile* and *inert* subject negotiate and adapt to in their own way. The *mobile* fixes (locates) the *inert* subjects along those scales (or scenes), while the *inert* subject, witnessing drastic changes to familiar surroundings (both public and private), has to adapt to a variety of material unknowns (safe shelter, food, etc.) The *mobile* subject is captivated by war (the dangers and thrills) and at the same time terrified of death, imprisonment, and abandonment at the same time. Many of the journalists, photographers and filmmakers make their mobility central to their accounts of what they were doing in the crisis zones. Their recollections are often about getting to a certain place just as much as about what they find upon their arrival. It seems the intensity of threat and danger increases the need for more explicit description of how they got there.

This type of ambivalence establishes the image-producers as a site of proximity and distance. Moving into unfamiliar places they seek to be close to people, their realities and experiences, yet constantly insist on keeping distance to them. The image-producers see themselves outside of the spectacle in which they actively partake, they are rarely part of the spectacle: they are in the war, but they can leave and enter this war as they wish; they are among the besieged and those fleeing their homes, but they are neither besieged nor expelled. They make their ambivalent relationship to people and places palpable “through a play of absences and presences” in the temporary sites of others (as reflected in their work). It is for this reason that my discussion of discursive (media) and material space reiterates Pile and Thrift’s emphasis on “the interrelation of numerous registers of space in the constitution of the subjects, including the geopolitical, the semiotic, the somatic and the psychic.”<sup>22</sup>

In the later discussion of Chantal Akerman’s film *D’Est*, “media privilege” of the *mobile* subject, which is always tied to its political position as well, may at first appear negligible, if not entirely missing. While Akerman does not map the post-communist space with the agenda of TV crews who approached it as an “agglomeration of (violent) sites assembled in a territory,”<sup>23</sup> she still traverses an unfamiliar landscape with her own aesthetic sensibilities, her politics, and ethics.<sup>24</sup> All of the image-producers discussed in this thesis approach the post-communist space with different purposes in mind, but from the same position of the *mobile* subject. Whether they help the viewer expand on the possibilities to perceive that space differently is not entirely beside the point, and will be addressed in the next section. But for the purposes of this thesis, how they form subjectivities in relation to the subjects they encounter is a much more interesting facet to explore, and one I will return to in the discussion of different documentary practices (Chapter 3).

By taking a variety of visual interventions into consideration, in the subsequent discussion I broach the contingencies of ‘the visual’ by exploring the character of such interventions in the violent break-up of Yugoslavia specifically. My focus, though, will remain on the production of relationships between *inert* subjects and those with agency to access and project their suffering beyond the local context.<sup>25</sup> My analysis of cases is centered on the premise that what lends the *inert* subject its discursive potency is the possibility of it being discovered and mediated by a *mobile* subject. In that sense, it isn’t just important to point out the commonly debated inequality in access to technology and means of self-representations that are often epitomized in these relationships, but, as I will argue, it is equally important to attempt to understand the depiction of *inert* subject in relation to its producer, the *mobile* subject. Put another way, I argue for the need to bring both into the field of vision with the intention to present a competing range of objectives and priorities with which to interpret the visual records.

## CHAPTER 2: ENCOUNTERS IN DISCURSIVE SPACE

*The definition of documentary in terms of the viewer's perception – i.e., as material perceived as signifying what it appears to record – avoids some of the wilder consequences of attempted definitions in terms of productive method, which, with their stress upon the status of the pro-filmic, inevitably end up in disputes about whether this or that reality is as real as it might be.*  
– Dai Vaughan<sup>26</sup>

No image is inherently transparent. Images present the viewer with a specific type of spatial system, with their own geography so to speak, and as such provide multiple entryways for interpretation. It is possible to map within both photographic and cinematic images relations between the people pictured; between people and objects that surround them; their proximity to the camera; the center of the image in relation to the margins. The viewer is able to acknowledge the way the camera captures a given moment in a long shot or a close up, either on location or as a result of cropping and zooming in the editing stage. What and how much the camera is able to capture might ultimately depend on the material facets of production, such as physical obstacles that demanded a particular placement of the camera - making only certain types of shots possible. In short, all images reflect not only artistic choices, but are also the product of technical, material, and social limitations of production. At the same time, as viewers survey images for meanings and significance, they actively construct the image's geography around the spatial markers mentioned above. In the process, they extract subjectivities and choices of the original author as they insert their own. The space of the image is reaffirmed by the viewer as a discursive/semiotic surface, and any pretense to transparency is thus revealed as illusion.<sup>27</sup>



What I am emphasizing here is that images always situate, and are situated. As the feminist theory remind us, the image doesn't simply reflect, it organizes our look, too.<sup>28</sup> It captures a point in time, but it doesn't capture the spatial (and social) relationships that constitute the subjects before and behind the camera at a given point in time. The image fragments space, but wants to appear coherent through its own spatial unity. The photographer might use the image as a way to emphasize his presence or he might refer to the aesthetic qualities of the composition as the sole organizer of meaning – and, in doing so, deliberately obscure his presence. If the photographer is able to add and withhold meaning from the image, then we must assume that there is always more to the image than what we can see, and what is missing from it might be just as important as what is there. As I will explain in the subsequent discussion, certain photojournalistic tropes can connect images to each other and generate meanings contrary to those intended by the photographer. What is important to understand here is that images in their relations to each other produce a particular kind of space, or what I call *discursive space*.

Documentary images help us engage the world at a distance. The knowledge that comes with it is a double-edged sword. The three distinct and interrelated documentary practices that I discuss in this thesis draw power and legitimacy from the same source: the image. At the same time, the images (like their producers) are integrated into a larger system of institutions of production, distribution, and consumption (photo agencies, international magazines and newspapers, book publishers). In other words, one can hardly discuss practices and their outcomes separately from the global flows of images, capital, and people. These flows together constitute discursive space that both accommodates and generates viewers' affects and prejudices and regulate their expectations of what documentary images should signify. The viewers, in turn, are rarely familiar with the represented realities apart from what is in the image.

The images are vestiges of places and people that might exist in myriad of configurations aside from the one pictured. The image-producers see a lot more in places they visit than what is contained in their images. They see worlds of meaning and experience.

As I begin to examine my first two cases of visual intervention, I would like to define the notion of discursive space in more detail. Unlike the earlier mentioned discursive surface of the image, discursive space is an arena for the formation of subjectivities around the visual as a system of knowledge production.<sup>29</sup> I base my definition of discursive space on W.J.T. Mitchell's seminal contribution to the field of visual culture - in particular, on his suggestion that we see the image as "a complex interplay between visibility, apparatus, institutions, bodies, and figurality."<sup>30</sup> In other words, the image exists as range of modes that inform the process of its interpretation. In wake of Mitchell's suggestion, other visual culture scholars have provided more precise definitions of each mode. The two that are of particular relevance for my discussion are 'bodies' and 'figurality':

'Bodies' reminds us not only of one of the image's privileged subjects, but of the presence of the viewer, spectator, observer, as the necessary 'other' in the circuits of visual meaning, which make meaning possible, and whose conduct images regulate. 'Figurality' reminds us of the image's privileged position in relation to representing or 'figuring' the world to us in pictorial form.<sup>31</sup>

As I hope to illustrate in my discussion of photojournalistic work, the dynamic between bodies and figurality warrants special attention for the understanding of the *mobile/inert* subject constitution. If we follow the assumption that bodies are 'one of the image's privileged subjects,' the position of the viewers as they contemplate a range of violated bodies that emerge in images from a war zone, is only of secondary importance. In that sense, Nicholas Mirzoeff's definition of the visual subject "as a person both constituted as an agent of sight and as the effect of a series

of categories of visual subjectivity”<sup>32</sup> is of critical importance for how I will approach the position of the *inert* subject in the visual field.

Although this chapter is theoretically premised on the arguments of visual culture scholar, I will also refer to the work of several cultural anthropologists on violence and state dismemberment.<sup>33</sup> This will expand the background for my discussion of Ron Haviv’s and Gilles Peress’ photojournalistic work during the war in Bosnia. The questions that I will be examining in the remainder of this chapter are: what does it mean to visualize violence, in the sense that it is both produced and consumed? Does mediated violence obscure the degree of actual violence? Both of these questions point toward to the inevitability of strategies and categories that contribute to the constitution of the *inert* subject in discursive space.

Ron Haviv’s visual record of the wars in Croatia, Bosnia, and Kosovo has been published in the collection titled *Blood and Honey*, inspired by the Turkish origin of the word Balkan (*Bal*=honey; *kan*=blood). Several of the pictures in the collection have appeared on the front covers of major international newspapers and magazines, in addition to winning awards for their contribution to war reportage and photojournalism in general. Hence any engagement with the visual interventions in Yugoslavia’s violent unraveling has to acknowledge today’s almost iconic status of Haviv’s photographs (Figure 1).<sup>34</sup> *Blood and Honey* delivers a record of all major conflict zones during the break up of Yugoslavia: the destruction of Vukovar and the sites of massacres and expulsions in Bosnia and Kosovo. Haviv captures individuals facing execution and imprisonment, grieving family members, alongside delirious soldiers, thugs, and murderers. On closer look, the order of photographs in Haviv’s book doesn’t correspond to the chronological order of the conflicts pictured. The images of the destroyed Vukovar are juxtaposed with those of the besieged Sarajevo, the refugee colonies from the Kosovo conflict in

1999 with those at the beginning of the war in Croatia in 1991 and later in Bosnia (see Figure 2). The book seems to strive for a cumulative effect, by building visual analogies and resemblances that conceal rather than reveal the differences in scope and pervasiveness of material violence in each of the Yugoslav conflicts.

In the introduction to the book, David Rieff points out that the images of war and humanitarian disaster more than others have “the capacity to define an event, just as some photographers have the skill, courage, understanding, and probably professional good fortune as well, to take the necessary risks needed to capture them.”<sup>35</sup> Working under the peculiar pressure of the moment, photojournalists confront the ethical dilemma of being in the position to record someone’s death only in retrospect, if at all. In Rieff’s praise of Haviv’s skills as a professional war photographer, he sees his intelligence and ability to ‘manage’ emotionally difficult and physically dangerous situations, and not the ethical ambivalence resulting from those situations, as characteristics that ultimately determine the formal qualities of the pictures. Rieff continues, “what gives Haviv’s photographs their exceptional force is how non-plastic they are, and how difficult to misinterpret or appropriate.”<sup>36</sup>

The edited collection of Haviv’s photojournalistic work is constructed on the visual exposition of violence as its leitmotif. As such, it runs the risk of representing atrocities by analogy to other atrocities, thus conflating disparate sources and outcomes of violence into a coherent narrative. Contrary to Rieff’s assumption, Haviv’s photographs circulate in a system that makes their misinterpretation and appropriation possible, if not likely. As Taylor cautions in his discussion of war photography, “dead people in pictures may be actual, but the credos and politics surrounding the photographs may confirm onlookers in any number of viewpoints, including the idea that these deaths are unfortunate, inevitable or even desirable.”<sup>37</sup>



(Illustration 1) *Top*: An elderly Croatian woman fleeing destroyed Vukovar. Fall 1991. *Middle*: A Bosnian woman at a refugee camp after Serb forces overran the UN Safe Area of Srebrenica. Summer 1995. *Bottom*: A Kosovar woman watches a house burn after it was struck by an artillery shell. Fall 1998 © Ron Haviv

Haviv's photographs of the imprisoned civilians in the detention camp in northern Bosnia in 1992 aren't just captivating for what they show, but more for how they've been appropriated to bring the Bosnian war in association with the memories of the Holocaust (Figure 2). Barbie Zelizer has illustrated in her study *Remembering to Forget* how the Holocaust iconography was appropriated by the media to explain some of the atrocities in the former Yugoslavia. She does not relativize the atrocities that occurred in former Yugoslavia, but rather argues for the significance of a historic event that resides in their particularity and not in their typicality. Her caveats on invoking the memory of the Holocaust in the discussion of the Bosnian or Kosovo atrocities circles back to Borcila's notion of Eastern Europe as 'a spectacle of crisis.' She defines it as a problem of "the spectacular bringing forth of a completely incomprehensible territory/space outside a normative Europe and United States."<sup>38</sup> To the global audience the post-communist space, thus, appears mainly within the genre of crisis and catastrophe specific to news coverage. She adds "encountering these sites, one does not plug into being Eastern European. Rather as sites that are supposedly revealed to the eye of an American viewer in their rough nakedness, (facts, facts, facts!), they recall his [viewer's] position as distant observer of this territory."<sup>39</sup>

We are ultimately left with the question, however, of whether the media narrative of the war in Yugoslavia created a climate for journalists to base their reporting on unconfirmed facts and to regularly speculate about causes and actors. A detailed examination of such questions is beyond the scope of this thesis, however, it wouldn't be far-fetched to assume that within 'the spectacle of crisis' narrative, the potential for extreme violence had already been established as a product of fact. The need for morbid sensationalism and the reference to the Holocaust often invoked through (photo-) journalistic tropes, might have been a way for (photo-) journalists to



(Illustration 2) Prisoners at the Trnopolje detention camp. Bosnia. Summer 1992 © Ron Haviv

insist on full exposure of and access to the crimes that had occurred, in all their graphic details. If there is a point from which one could attack the media for drawing false analogies, it would be the self-serving request to invade privacy and portray horror and death that hinted at the need for a spectacle. It provided photojournalists like Haviv with the alibi to expose (or discursively-constitute) the *inert* subject, without having to consider the ethical necessities of consent, privacy, and reciprocity.

The concerns raised thus far about the media's false resemblances between the wars in the former Yugoslavia highlight how instances of political violence can be decontextualized and often depoliticized. The overt focus on dramatic narrative, clearly present in Haviv's collection of photographs, and the *inert* subject's plight might mean that the wider historical and political context, potential explanations, and the causal links are either omitted or only acknowledged in the margins. These problems may result in oversimplification and stereotypes to create meaning, not to mention the false historical parallels, such as those discussed by Zelizer.<sup>40</sup> Instead of assuming that Haviv's pictures speak for themselves, it is precisely on these examples of mediated war and suffering that I was able to shed light on the nature of representation and power relations that emerge from encounters between the photojournalists (*mobile*) and their subjects (*inert*).

Photojournalism and TV reportage, probably more than other documentary practices, operate with the supply and demand logic of consumption. As Taylor points out in his discussion of photojournalistic practices, “the ecology of images, the way they are stored, marketed and sold, converge with the way that press (and broadcasting) managers restrain horror on behalf of ‘citizens’ who they assume would prefer not to be disturbed.”<sup>41</sup> One can just as well imagine the reverse scenario, as the question of propriety is ultimately linked to the media’s interest in viewership and profit. In fact, Ron Haviv’s photographs open up venues for the discussion of the production of the ‘real’ and ‘authentic’ in documentary accounts of post-communist space not as product of facts, but of a certain visual approach and manipulation, combining at its base both the need to show and the inadequacy of showing. As some scholars have pointed out “the ordinary individual was highlighted, encouraging empathy and also clarity: the simple imperative of visual suffering. These narratives were formed to an extent by factors within the news-gathering process: the technological capacity to undertake certain kinds of reports, the logistical imperatives of news-gathering, and the explicit emphasis of the journalist themselves.”<sup>42</sup> Haviv’s work, similar to that of a humanitarian relief agency or a human rights organization, plays an important part not only in representing the violence but also in acting on “the anticipation of local communities on how their suffering is to be addressed.”<sup>43</sup> In that sense, his work isn’t only informed by the politics and commerce of the global media industry, but to a degree by his own personal commitments as well.<sup>44</sup>

Unlike Haviv’s collection, Peress’ *Farewell to Bosnia* is limited to the early phase of the war in Bosnia. The book is a record of the photographer’s three-month-long journey through the country in 1993. Although many of the pictures have appeared on the pages of the international press, the project was initially presented as part of a touring photography exhibit in museums and



galleries around the U.S and Europe, before it was published as a book.<sup>45</sup> This gave Peress a type of control over how he wanted to present his work. Like most photojournalists who are contracted by photo agencies, he has very little a control over how the newspapers will integrate his photographs into a publication (from the choice of titles or captions that will accompany the photograph to the ways a picture can be cropped and placed within a specific context).

Considering that *Farewell to Bosnia* was edited by Peress, the sequencing of images, their size, how they are complemented by captions or absence of captions altogether is representative of the photographer's intentions and choices. Further, presenting *Farewell to Bosnia* first as an exhibit, allowed Peress to situate the meaning of his photographs into a specific context, elevating them from mere journalistic work to documentary photography with an artistic pretext. My discussion of Peress' photographs will alternate between these competing qualities in his documentary work in Bosnia.<sup>46</sup>

*Farewell to Bosnia* opens with black and white compositions of refugees roaming the Bosnian countryside. Several of the first images are shot through a car window (frame within a frame), exposing the photographer as someone who moves in (or is transported) to these sites (Figure 3). The movement of the photographer, like the people he photographs, is what gives the images a thematic unity. It also sets the structure of the book, which is divided into four sections each corresponding to a different site of the photographer's journey, with subsections devoted to an event or setting he encountered there. The subsections, too, mostly revolve around the movement of people - forced movement, to be more precise.

Throughout the book, Peress documents evacuations of the wounded from the besieged enclaves in eastern Bosnia and hospitals in other parts of the country; evacuations of elderly and children from the besieged Sarajevo; convoys of refugees; people in detention camps and gyms

that had been converted to temporary shelters for the displaced. His images from the besieged Sarajevo capture desperate moments of makeshift morgues and cemeteries, burials, gruesome scenes from operating tables, lines for water, and people hoarding water canisters and wood. We see images of children playing with fake guns, emulating the life of the adults around them – playing a pretend-war.

Perres describes the images collected in *Farewell to Bosnia* as a "raw take, a non-edit, the most un-photographic project I have done." The scant reviews in English, of both the book and the exhibit, appear to challenge that assertion. The critics largely complement Peress on the artistic qualities of his compositions and for not infusing his photographs with the shock value typical of the war coverage. As one reviewer puts it, "though well stocked with dead bodies" the images convey a strong sense of "loss and breakage and dislocation, the jagged destruction of normal ways of life, the dark foreclosure of futures. [...] Peress' photographs of Bosnia are poised somewhere between photojournalism and art. They superimpose his own harsh, disjunctive, off-balance style."<sup>47</sup> Other reviewers have recognized in these images the photographer's tribute to the citizens of Bosnia, to their ability and resourcefulness in managing day to day life in the war zone.<sup>48</sup> While it's not entirely true that shock value is missing from Peress' images, the desperation, anguish, and fear reflected on peoples' faces are mostly presented to the viewer as a response to something the photographer deliberately conceals from our view. These moments, however are not captured in the so-called raw, straightforward, and up-close shots, but rather in the carefully composed shot of peoples' reflections in the shattered shop windows, and in the intersections of looks that stretch from the center of the image to its margins, and back.

Peress' reflections on the results of his journey are sparse in tones of self-praise and worthy accomplishment; as well, he does not stress the artistic qualities of his images too much. If anything, the excerpts from his diary and letters to friends foreground above all his bitterness, disappointments, doubts, and a lack in understanding of the events he photographs. He is aware that his work can hardly explain the political context of the events in Bosnia, yet it does seem to find its place in the bloody 20<sup>th</sup> century of European history. If for no other reason, he - the photographer - was there "to provide a visual continuum of experience, of existence." The seeming (or perhaps intentional) inability of the photographer to attribute some sort of historical specificity to the images from Bosnia, has prompted critics to interpret his work as a "melancholic representation of the violence of human history. At this level of collective abstraction and historical categorization, death becomes paradoxically more palatable."<sup>49</sup> I wouldn't go as far as to deny the specificity of time and place in Peress images from Bosnia. His work does not rely strictly on the photojournalistic modes and tropes of wrenching images from all sorts of locations as examples that conform to the expectations of the general viewership (as we have seen with Haviv). At the same time, the argument that the death of individuals in Peress' images is somehow disavowed because it is abstracted for both its philosophical and historical significance,<sup>50</sup> needs to take into account not just the force of immediate delivery of the photographic image, but also its ambiguities, its constraints, and its adaptability as a historical document.

On a more encompassing note, Peress has described his investment in photography as a search to "formalize his relationships with the world" through the contradictions and confrontations between different meanings, processes, and histories that the reality offers to his eye.<sup>51</sup> He is not after perfect pictures. His focus is on "the struggle of individuals in historical

context” that demands formal strategies able of reflecting the fragmented experience of that struggle. As he has stated in an interview: “I gave up the notion that a photograph represents *me* speaking to *you*. It is not for me a closed text in which I deliver you a message that can be inserted into a neat category. A photograph is an open text in which half of the message, or half of the text, is in you and how you read it.”<sup>52</sup> The frames of references that Peress offers to the viewer in *Farewell to Bosnia* are not only limited to images, they include excerpts from his letters to friends and the journal he kept while in Bosnia. These texts bracket the visual record of journey with analogies to the photographer’s personal history of ethnic violence and with references to its present and historical instances. At the same time, these texts bear a trace of the author’s intention to provide a viewer with more than just a direction through the war-ridden Bosnian landscape. By re-purposing the ethnic frames of reference, Peress assigns the *inert*



(Illustration 3) Refugees on the road in central Bosnia. 1993 © Gilles Peress

subjects in his photographs a distinct identity. The bodies of the wounded, the maimed, and the expelled are assigned attributes of collective identities and function as symbol of different ethnic communities. Just like in the earlier discussed images of Ron Haviv, the *inert* subject in Peress' pictures is magnified and re-produced as a site of collective trauma and a site of public scrutiny.

When trauma becomes a subject of public scrutiny, substantial ethical issues spring to the fore: concerns of consent, privacy, reciprocity, and access, all of which have been at the core of debates surrounding visual representations of human tragedies.<sup>53</sup> *Farewell to Bosnia* features many chilling close-ups of people in pain and despair. Peress is able to move between many sites of trauma on his journey through Bosnia, gaining access to refugee shelters, the UN convoys, detention camps, morgues, and hospitals. All this allows him to remain at a close proximity to the grieving families, the wounded, and the dead. By far the most gruesome sequence in the book is from a hospital in Mostar. Here, the viewer stares straight into the eyes of a teenager with an amputated right arm and a disfigured face from a mortar attack (Figure 4). As an experienced photojournalist Peress uses the potency of this encounter to convey suffering by focusing on the most obvious bearer of physical trauma - the human body. At this moment, the personal integrity of the person in the picture is only of peripheral importance, if at all. The sense of urgency to make cruelty visible pervades over all other concerns - here is the image, as Susan Linfield puts it, that "show how easily we are reduced to the merely physical, which is to say how easily the body can be maimed, starved, splintered, beaten, burnt, torn, and crushed. Photographs present us, in short, with physical cruelty and our vulnerability to it."<sup>54</sup>

All this points toward an obvious assumption by now (although by no means unproblematic), that the violated body is central to the representation of wars. On the other hand, the pain embodied remains real, and it is not in my intention to marginalize or scrutinize the pain

portrayed in Peress and Haviv's images, but rather to look at how that pain is brought to our attention, how the *inert* subjects "become visible to us, or cease to be visible to us."<sup>55</sup> I am challenging the scholarship on photography that conflates the focus on the individual suffering with a sense of shared humanity, shared suffering, and even empathy from those who are in the position to contemplate someone else's pain.<sup>56</sup> While Peress' images may focus on one body or a particular event, the viewer may conclude that suffering and the need to stem it are shared universals (this is implied in Peress' letters too). While this may be one correct analysis for how viewers apprehend images of suffering, another interpretation is equally plausible, particularly in the context of the collapsing state structure in Yugoslavia.

Instead of an image of war violence standing in for all of humanity or creating a sense of common humanity, images from crisis-ridden Eastern Europe, in many cases, have led to a differentiation between viewer and victim and a reinforcement of "otherness." These images starts to stand in for a particular territory, ideology (and its collapse) and particular power relations. Thus, instead of a the viewer feeling empathy and connection with the victims, the tropes of photojournalistic work may just be another illustration for an anarchic crisis ridden post-communist space, part of a much broader story and dynamic than what individual images reveal.<sup>57</sup>

*Farewell to Bosnia* and *Blood and Honey* are significant works of photojournalism, not only for their power to make violence visible, but in how they utilize certain photographic tropes to direct the viewers' understanding and interpretation of the historical events. Haviv's and Perres' images tell us a lot about the existing assumptions and views of the Yugoslav conflict at the time of their production. I have offered a detailed discussion of their work with the intention to illustrate both the possibilities and limitation of photojournalism to define the encounters

between *mobile* and *inert* subjects. On the level of photojournalistic practice, representation is linked with guidelines, governance, acceptability - a matrix that defines the boundaries of photojournalists' work and of their engagement with the subjects. It is precisely for this reason that I have started this chapter with the definition of discursive space, the actual site of the production of the *inert* subject. By emphasizing the way Haviv and Peress represent the space through which they move and temporarily occupy, I wanted to draw the attention to how much of the constitution of the *inert* subject depends on the way-in and way-out of the *mobile* subject, and the limited amount of circularity and interaction that discursive space affords.



(Illustration 4) *Top left*: Evacuation of children and the elderly from the besieged Sarajevo. *Top right*: Evacuation of the wounded from a hospital in central Bosnia. *Center*: Victims of a mortar attack in a hospital in Mostar, 1993  
© Gilles Peress

### CHAPTER 3: THE TRAVELING IMAGE-PRODUCER

*We cannot discuss the particular for long without addressing the peculiarity of the often absent filmmaker who urges us to draw larger lessons from the specific ones he or she learned and filmed.* – Bill Nichols<sup>58</sup>

Where in the preceding chapter I mapped the *mobile/inert* subject configuration onto images (emphasizing the constitution of the *inert* subject), in the third and final section of the thesis, I map the configuration into physical spaces with another set of image-producers at the center.<sup>59</sup> I turn my attention now to the discussion of Chantal Akermans's film *D'est* (From the East) from 1993 and Luc Delahaye's collection of photographs *Winterreise* (Winter Journey) from 1998. Like Peress but with very different results, both artists, each in their respective medium, attempt to capture 'the struggles' of the individual in a changing and precarious time. Both place into doubt the very quest or the belief in the essential or authentic experience by emphasizing the material contingencies of their productions. Luc Delahaye's work follows closely the conventions of the documentary photo-essay, while Chantal Akerman's documentary provides an experimental intervention in the genre of documentary film.

In the summer of 1992, Chantal Akerman set out with a small crew on a cinematic journey across a wide range of countries east of her native Belgium just as that part of Europe had begun to thaw from the bloc of imposed sameness. Unlike the western TV crews, which at the time scoured the lands for communist prisons, abandoned orphanages, etc., clustering facts about political and social traumas into sensational reportages, Akerman struck a subversive approach. Even an attempt at summarizing *D'est* proves difficult and likely irrelevant. Composed



mostly of long tracking shots, it is a film about people, strangers to the director and the audience. The caption-less, dialogue and voice-over free film offers no hints as to who these people are, where they are, or why they should matter. Most let the camera slide by in silence; the words of those who sporadically address it are not translated. As one reviewer puts it, “for all we know these people might be coming from a timeless zone and remain there as extras as the traveler passes through.”<sup>60</sup> Here, the conventional documentary narrative structure is replaced by a series of abstract associations, unless one sees in a journey a narrative, a road movie that really isn’t (Figure 5).

*D’est* makes the very practice of filmmaking its principal subject. Akerman’s intentions, or organization of an argument that would correspond to the conventionally defined “documentary logic”<sup>61</sup> is complicated, if not entirely denied, by her formal minimalism. The film accumulates a wealth of information, painstaking details, but it resists the establishment of hierarchies, the privileging of one moment over another. It leaves the viewers puzzled and grasping for directions, which the filmmaker deliberately withholds from them. Unlike the previously discussed photojournalists, the filmmaker here does not order the chaotic reality in any particular way. On the contrary, Akerman deliberately amplifies disorder.

A more detailed discussion of formal aspects of *D’est* is required to understand how inventions and interventions in form can complicate the commonly assumed links between representation and actuality. Catherine Russell places both *D’est* and its formalist predecessor *News From Home* (1977) in the tradition of filmmaking known as structural cinema. What is characteristic of this strand of cinema is the strategic usage of fixed frame, single takes that last for several minutes, and extreme attention to details. According to Russell, structural cinema transforms space and time “into an autonomous image sphere that might be grounded in a pre-

existing reality, but is also independent of it.”<sup>62</sup> In respects to Akerman’s films, the viewer expecting to watch a documentary about the director’s journey through ‘the East’ is presented instead with images that function as “allegory of reality.” These are, as Russell puts it, hyperrealist images that detach “subject and object, viewer and viewed, from any contract with truth, evidence, or authenticity: people perform themselves.”<sup>63</sup> This observation serves as the pillar for Russell’s own attempt to bridge ethnography with experimental filmmaking.

Akerman, like the rest of the photographers and filmmakers whom I discuss in this thesis, addresses social and historical ambiguities through aesthetic and formal means, rendering the questions of representation as complex and interrelated. As my analysis so far has illustrated, the structuralist impulse behind Chantal Akerman’s *D’Est* confronts the normative content, form and the meaning of ‘documentary’ through a different set of formal qualities. In place of, and against, Bill Nichols’ characterization of documentary discourse as “direct, immediate, and transparent”<sup>64</sup> in relation to “the real,” Russell insists on “the real” that encompasses the “realities of experience, desire, memory, and fantasy”<sup>65</sup> of the filmmaker and the spectator alike. If the documentary discourse is able to exert its power by combining knowledge and information in explaining ‘the historical world’ with its motivating mechanisms, the power of different realities that Russell invokes is just as historical and capable of producing real effects on documentary practices, formats, and institutions.

After I situate Akerman’s film within a specific cinematic tradition and emphasize the significance of formal elements in the production of documentary subjectivities and epistemologies, I will return to the analysis of *D’est* with the *mobile/inert* subjects configuration in mind. Critics have pointed out that, on the one hand, Akerman’s images of post-communist Eastern Europe correspond largely to the way the Western viewers have come to perceive it: “as

a region where crowds move about, communicating little or not at all, engaged simply in the activity of survival, where people all look similar, all blending in an anonymity that conforms to the Western stereotype of Eastern Europe, all wearing similar hats and overcoats.”<sup>66</sup> On the other hand, Akerman’s film opens up possibilities to dispel that uniformity by focusing on unnamed individuals in private spaces, primarily their apartments. Spaas concedes, “the gaze from within the image itself creates a face-to-face confrontation that arouses the discomfort and unease of the spectator and imbues the viewer’s gaze with a sense of voyeuristic embarrassment.”<sup>67</sup> While some might be left wondering about the director’s own discomfort while filming in people’s homes, the question that might bear more productive discussion is what motivated Akerman’s journey in the first place?

In the production notes to the film, Akerman states she didn’t travel all the way to Russia only to see what she had been prepared to see in the first place. Her intention was to show faces that “express something still untouched and often the opposite of that uniformity that at times strike you in the movement of the crowds [...]. Without romanticizing it, I would say these are countenances that are not ruined, that offer and give themselves as they are, and erase, for an instant, the feeling of loss, of a world at the edge of an abyss, a feeling that grabs you when you cross the East, as I just did.”<sup>68</sup> Akerman’s allusions reveal a kind of nostalgia that rests on the premise of something ‘over there’ vanishing and that it’s up to the filmmakers, photographers, etc. to preserve a visual record of that something before it disappears for good (Delahaye’s journey is propelled by similar impulse). By identifying the crowds as a vehicle of that nostalgia, the director enters a one-way relationship with them.

In another comparison of *D’est* to *News From Home*, Russell identifies the public as the “object of scrutiny [in the two films] as individuals surface in the crowd, and the crowd itself is



(Figure 5) Screenshots from *D'est* that illustrate the variety of spaces Akerman moves through and into (public/private; exterior/interior)

part of the specific architecture in which it is seen. The films become a historical record by accident rather than intention.”<sup>69</sup> In *D’est*, the repercussions of the totalitarian past appear on the margins; they are manifested in small gestures: people in the waiting room of a train station turn away from the camera or bury their faces in heavy winter coats. The Soviet bureaucracy, which bore an anonymous countenance akin to Akerman’s camera, disposed people of privacy by keeping tabs on them, secretly documenting their lives, and maintaining surveillance matrices. It schooled people in fear, and in turn people learned how to be distrustful. In relation with ‘the crowd’ everything seems to hinge on maintaining the proper distance. As Russell points out: “because the reverse shot is consistently repressed, the gaze is represented in the film as a space, a distance between one body and another, reproduced as a kind of untraversable void.”<sup>70</sup> Akerman insists on a constant awareness of the distance between her, the *mobile* subject, and the people who occupy the frame, the *inert* subjects. The “untraversable void,” is at once the product of the physical distance between the filmmaker and others and of the distance between presumption and perception generated by the viewer.

From Akerman’s production notes, we also come to grasp the personal importance of her journey and another source of her nostalgia. The filmmaker returns to the place of her Jewish parents via the roads and landscapes traveled in the film. And while her nostalgia, or a personal confrontation with the past, maps a real space, at the slow pace of a contemplative camera, her mind, on the other hand, imbued with uncertainty and detachment, explores the symbolic and emotional spaces between her and the people in the film. It is as if the filmmaker refuses to make herself, or the images that she brings back from her journey, an axis along which we make sense of this foreign space. Throughout the film, Akerman emphasizes her own dislocation, rather than the narrative of a completed (self-) discovery.

Through my analysis of *D'est* so far, several spatial tropes have once again jumped to the fore: travel as a form of movement, (dis-) location, and distance. The importance of travel for the *mobile* subject can easily assume proportions that border on the mythical.<sup>71</sup> As Nichols points out in his discussion of the traveling ethnographer “movement and travel participate in the construction of an imaginary geography that maps the world required to support the sense of self for whom this world is staged.”<sup>72</sup> This kind of travel assumes complete freedom of movement, effortless transgression of national borders, and the technological ability to move and reflect on space through which ones move in a myriad of ways. For the mobile image-producers, thus, movement presents the promise of presence. In turn, bodily presence asserts authority, even when “the body of the anthropologist/filmmaker usually disappears behind the optical vantage point where the camera and filmmaker preside - a perspectival equivalent, but behind the scenes, of the film frame’s internal vanishing point.”<sup>73</sup>

The effacement of the image-producers from the visual record is intended to generate the earlier invoked illusion of transparency. The reality of the physical encounter between the image-producers and their subjects, and the experience of how they form subjectivities in relation to spaces they temporarily occupy, are thus sacrificed to an urge to stress above all the authenticity of what is shown. Nichols describes this as the frequently unacknowledged guarantee of documentary film: “What you see is what there was (I know: I was there).” It may also guarantee that “What you see is what there would have been if I had not been there to film it (I know: I was there and I can attest to the representativeness of what you see).”<sup>74</sup> Distance in a way creates both authenticity and authority in documentary productions.

Perhaps the kind of reflexivity that I highlight above can only be conveyed in retrospect, through a voice-over commentary, and not within the space that emerges between the recording

camera and the events unfolding in front of it. There is, however, at least one sequence in *D'est* that presents a possibility for the filmmaker to make her position palpable. Nearly half-way through the film there is a steady 360-degree camera pan in the lobby of a train station. This very long take adds little new information to the film, yet it is the film's pivot. It demarcates the exact position of the filmmaker within this specific space, it carves out a reflexive space for the filmmaker who is signaling to the viewer: "I am not exempt from this space; on the contrary, I actively participate in its production." Unlike the tracking shots from a moving car that make up most of the film, the 360 degree shot isn't so much about registering the surfaces of the peoples' faces or places, it is about what it's like to be in a specific space, or more concretely what it's like to establish oneself (the filmmaker's own physicality) as a scale (in Cresswell's sense) in that space. This perfectly executed pan allows Akerman to represent her subjectivity, perspective, style, and perception of her surroundings all at once. She doesn't seek *inert* subjects to relay qualities of their encounter to the viewer, since this would require that she substitute their visibility for her own.

Looking at *D'est* with the *mobile/inert* subject configuration in mind has allowed me to draw important connections between the themes of movement, positionality, subjectivity, and form in documentary practice. This discussion has also highlighted the degrees of the *mobile* subject's personal investment in the social and political realities that both produce and are produced by spaces of their inquiries. Akerman's images, on the other hand, retain moments of the encounter between the *mobile* and *inert* subjects in ways that continually shift our attention between the peculiarities of those in front the camera to those standing behind it. The *mobile/inert* subject framing has also allowed me retain that attention a lot longer on the positioning of the *mobile* subject who participates in production of space just as much as the

*inert* subject. But more importantly, this has provided me with a position from which to interrogate the “self-evident quality” of situations and events that documentary works generally postulate.<sup>75</sup>

As illustrated in my earlier discussion of Haviv’s and Perres’ photography, the meanings that the viewer attributes to the images of war and suffering, inadvertently legitimizes the conventional documentary ways of exposing the violated bodies as ‘normal’ and thereby excluding a whole range of alternatives. This is exactly what Pile and Thrift criticize when they assert that, “the individual is mapped as a subject through the practices of the body and subjectivity; practices which come to be seen as a natural spatial referents.”<sup>76</sup> In fact, Pile and Thrift’s spatial referents that I discuss in the introduction to this thesis in way one or another encompass the three spatial motifs around which I have structured my analysis. But the point that I am trying to make here has to do with the way that documentary practices can make those referents seem “natural,” when space is perceived and represented “as a passive, objective, neutral backdrop to thought, feeling, and action.” If space is understood in this way, then the *mobile* subject would be able to anchor itself in a wide range of physical realities with only marginal participation in the production of those realities. But Akerman’s particular way of anchoring itself but physically and discursively offers a possibility to conceive of the *mobile* subject in a radically different way from my previous discussion. To illustrate that the dimensions of the *mobile* subject that I was able to extract from Akerman’s film can also apply to photography, I will next engage with Luc Delahaye’s photo essay of his journey to Russia in the winter of 1998.

Similar to those in Akerman’s film, people and places in Luc Delahaye’s *Winterreise* remain mostly unidentified, or they are identified by attributes such as a drunk, the homeless, the



orphan, the worker – hardly ever by their names. The reader is given a set of geographical markers (several cities across Russia) at the end of the book. Yet, the terse captions that accompany individual photographs rarely reference the location of their origin. Since it remains difficult to identify the actual sites of the photographer's journey across Russia in the wake of the country's 1998s economic crisis, our attention is drawn to what constitutes abstract sites of the photographer's inquiry: poverty, drug addiction, alcoholism, homelessness, violence, and death. All this reiterates the earlier notion of *inert* subjects that aren't just situated in a particular space, as if set against a background, rather the impoverished spaces they occupy, too, are framed to reflect their anonymity and destitution. One commentator summarized his impression of the people in Delahaye's photographs as "red smears of human destitution," and their surroundings as "the tawdry furnishings a physical extension of the debauched bodies."<sup>77</sup> Without doubt, Delahaye's images accommodate the viewer's pity and disgust a lot better than their empathy.

At the same time, associations between images that the viewer is able to make on his own are limited. One can much easier decipher the quality of their composition: Delahaye's superb use of natural light, the range of hues and saturation, framing, the contrast between exterior and interior shots, and so on. Thematically, on the other hand, all images in the book seem to converge into a single idea: here is yet another set of *inert* subjects as the photographer "discovered them." The impression that the social contexts in which these bodies exist are real regardless of the photographer's presence and ability to document them, is hardly different from how people perceive documentary value in Ron Haviv's and Gilles Peress' pictures from the war zone that I discussed earlier.<sup>78</sup>

Delhaye's deliberately lyrical introduction to the book (its brevity shouldn't belie its importance), provides both the context and direction for interpretation, and it allows me to

engage with the images (and the journey) on the photographer's terms<sup>79</sup>:

"Given the great nation, fervent and proud,  
given the people who have always known suffering,  
condemned to life underground and who,  
in the euphoria of humiliation, see themselves with clarity

Given the photographer, setting the degree of his  
indifference with precision and impatiently awaiting  
a slight derangement of his sight

Given the territory, a grotesque empire,  
a dull and almost empty space"

The introduction already suggests the "interrelation of different registers of space," that are offered by Pile and Thrift in the introduction to this thesis: the *geopolitical* in respect to territory, nation, and the former empire; the *psychic* in respect to the photographer's sight and indifference and to the suffering and humiliation of those he photographs; and the *semiotic* – the images that are the product of their encounters. From Delahaye's terse description of his journey (in the book and subsequent interviews), what drove him to Russia was the need to excavate something lost within himself and the people he imagined he would find there. Delahaye's journey is similar to Akerman's, in that both artists connect their impulse to self-discovery to movement that seeks to capture (or recover) something that is on the verge of vanishing or that no longer exist. At the same time, his introduction presents the vast space of Russia as something that could only be grasped in imagination. Hence, Delahaye's own projections of what this space has to offer prove critical to how he might experience and represent it. Unfamiliar spaces for the *mobile* subject are first imagined before they become real, and as "real" they are imbued with symbolic significance.

The first image in the series *Winterreise* shows a man standing in the midst of what appears to be a landfill (Figure 6). He occupies the center of the image, his look turned away from the camera. He is holding a dirty sack over his left shoulder while resting his right side on a

cane. It is a kind of picture that could have been taken anywhere. The romanticist impulse in Delahaye's introduction seeps into this image, turning it into an ambiguous, or at best farcical, referent to Caspar David Friedrich's famous painting *Wanderer above the Sea of Fog*.<sup>80</sup> Unlike the person in Delahaye's photograph, the man in Friedrich's painting is perched on a mountain peak, dressed in a cloak he is overlooking the foggy landscape replete with promises of mystery and discovery alike. Where in Friedrich's painting we sense a multiplicity of directions for the anonymous person in the picture (whose pose exudes self-confidence), in Delahaye's image, on the other hand, there is nothing about the setting of the scavenger that would generate possibilities for his movement forward.

The impression that the first image sets grows more oppressive and foreboding as the viewer progresses through the book. There is a sequence of images showing a drinking binge between a middle-age couple (likely alcoholics) at their kitchen table - the images capture their awkward embraces, boredom, embarrassment, and their gradual descent into numbing oblivion. The sequence ends with the woman spread out on an unmade bed in a dimly lit room. This sequence is followed by several images of young people passed out of drug overdose on the kitchen floor, chairs, and staircases – their bodies infused with warm red and orange light, giving them an aura of tranquility. The book continues with images of idle coal miners and abandoned industrial landscape; portraits of dazed teenagers at a psychiatric hospitals and a prison; a scene of freshly committed murder, with the victim, the accused murder, and the blood stains on the pillow and clothing on display; and a shot of a stripper performing for \$2. There are many more sequences of binge drinking similar to the one described above, sequences that convey a passing of time and a long presence of the photographer at peoples' homes (and perhaps his participation, too).<sup>81</sup>



(Illustration 6) First image in *Winterreise* © Luc Delahaye

If I had been attempting to read Delahaye's pictures as a social reportage, all these details would warrant a discussion beyond the merely descriptive. In several of his interviews, however, Delahaye insists on the allegorical in his photographs, something that transcends conventional social critique or the call for artist's political engagement. He has indicated that the persuasive power of his images emerges from his compositions (the formal elements), and not from any message that might be contained in the image.<sup>82</sup> Nonetheless, there is a substantial base from which one could articulate a range of ethical concerns in respect to Delahaye's work.

A particularly constructive critique would borrow from Martha Rosler's observations on documentary practice, when engagements with poverty frequently turn from something "boringly sociological" into "the excitingly mythological/psychological."<sup>83</sup> A documentary photographer in her own right, Rosler cautions against the overt emphasis on the formal properties and "the language of aesthetic appreciation" in documentary work. She is right in suggesting that: "the poetics of form can lead to a reception of images as poetic, a form of personalized address that escapes either responsibility or reportorial accuracy, though it may of course increase the force of truth, but as subjectivized witness rather than objective reportage."<sup>84</sup>

Beyond her explicit critique of how images are perceived by the viewer, Rosler's deeper concerns with documentary practice lie with the ethical responsibilities of the artists to their subjects, the awareness of power relations, and the artist's ability to identify social causes and make them visible. She laments "the loss of specificity and scrumptiousness" in the work of photographers like Delahaye. Here, according to Rosler, "the photographer, rather than the subjects, becomes a kind of psychological or characterological type, and it is with the photographer that one identifies, reforging links between this form of photography and old fashioned travelogues."<sup>85</sup>

I want to engage Rosler's critique of documentary form and perception through my analytical framing of *inert/mobile* subjects in relation to Delahaye's work specifically. For that, I have to return to the first image in the collection (of the scavenger in the garbage dump), and raise questions exactly about the photographer rather than the person in the image. How does this image set a direction for Delahaye, the *mobile* subject; how does it situate him in a specific intellectual lineage; and more importantly how does this image connect to the photographer's auto-portrait later in the book and to the images that are devoid of people? By this I mean primarily his "window-shots" at different stages of the journey and the landscape portraits. Those images start to occupy more and more space in the second half of the book – the book in fact ends with a long sequence of images of winter-landscapes, dotted with gorgeous silhouettes of birch tree woods.

By raising these interconnected questions about the photographer, I acknowledge Delahaye proclivity for romanticizing the abject, and in light of the explicit pathos in his introduction, see in him (as Rosler would, too) the old-fashioned figure of the artist as a romantic explorer. I have already touched on the direction that Delahaye sets for himself on his journey





(Illustration 7) Window shots and a self-portrait © Luc Delahaye

through Russia, but it's worth examining Delahaye search for "a slight derangement of photographer's sight" as a possible direction marker as I engage with the completed product of his journey – the book, that ultimately conveys a chronology and experience of journey in different order of priorities. Here, I would like to engage with another of Pile and Thrift's suggested pathways for "mapping the subject," that of visuality. Building on my earlier discussion of power relations embedded in the constitution of the *inert* subject through the systems of representation and spectatorship, I would like to turn my focus once again on dimensions of seeing that constitute the *mobile* subject more specifically. As Pile and Thrift aptly put it:

Each dimension of seeing invokes differently a different kind of space between the person who looks and the object that looks back: there is a position, distance and an orientation to the look, which specifies a particular space of meaning and power: this space is neither isolated nor abstract; this space both contains and refuses an infinite number of invocations of meaning and power; this space is constitutive of the visual practice, it is staging and integrating the lines of power and meaning between the look and the look-back.<sup>86</sup>

The space exposed to Delahaye's sight, the space upon which he maps subjectivity (his own and of the people he meets), is an active space, it is both produced and consumed by the photographer. And the dynamic of this interaction is best illustrated in Delahaye's picture that is devoid of people. When there is no one in front of the camera, the person behind it starts to matter a lot more. It is through these images that the photographer's vision, or a "slight derangement" thereof, emerges as an obvious direction marker.

At the same time, the viewer is likely to wonder about the purpose of the stylized landscape pictures and window shots - how they might fit with the overwhelming sense of stupor and decrepitude that this book generates? Is the photographer's intention to provide moments of respite by inserting some "beauty" into the never-ending stream of misery, or simply to illustrate the change of places? Or, could these images express a kind of struggle similar to that of Akerman - namely, Delahaye's attempt to define a reflexive space, or his anchoring, that is essential to the constitution of the *mobile* subject? The auto-portrait of Delahaye, more than any other picture in the series, conveys to the viewer a sense of interconnectedness between the photographer, the *mobile* subject, and the place he temporarily occupies.<sup>87</sup> The interior of a bathroom, with the reflection of the shirtless photographer in the mirror, presents the only decent looking setting in the entire book (Figure 7). This place cannot be isolated from other places recorded on his journey, nor can the *mobile* subject, with its subjectivity, be isolated from spaces



he traverses. Space, once again, emerges as the constitutive factor of subjectivity, and the *mobile* subject as an active producer of it.

Once again, the categories I used to define the *mobile* and *inert* subjects (positionality, movement, and visibility) become tools with which to explore the photographer's space of inquiry and his place in it. As illustrated on previous cases that I have discussed, these categories exist between competing discourses: historical, aesthetic, and ethical. My discussion of Delahaye's series *Winterreise*, is a useful reminder, that the *mobile* subject is only partially anchored in both time and space. Through the *mobile/inert* reading, the public spaces in Akerman's film (the snow covered streets, dance halls, and train station lobbies) and the interiors of people's homes in Delahaye's photographs become scales along which the physical presence of the *mobile* subject is established. As Pile and Thrift remind us "subjectivity and place cannot be separated without foreclosing an understanding of the located subject and the agency and identity of place."<sup>88</sup>

By way of Akerman's film and Delahaye's photographs, I have pushed the position of the *mobile subject* in the documentary practice into focus. The relationship of the filmmaker or a photographer to the represented realities is never accidental. It is imperative to understand their motivations and intentions, even at the risk of being speculative. The core of the discussion about documentary practice, experimental or not, has for a long time now be centered on the power relationship between the observer and the observed. Filmmakers or photographers' power to represent has been linked to that of a technological instrument: the camera's power to record. Yet, to say that the camera can be used as a tool of manipulation and subordination does not imply that it endows the image-producers with any kind of power over their subjects. Just as the reverse is true, the notion of empowering *inert* subjects with technology, allowing them to

represent themselves to ‘us’ presupposes a constituency of viewer that in the end is empowered with a gaze and the privilege of access to ‘their’ realities. Put another way, the artist’s privilege of choice engenders a privilege of access for specific viewers, a point that I have already illustrated in the preceding chapter on documentary work in war zones.

This epistemological conundrum prompted Bill Nichols to contemplate on “the Geertzian problematic where representation becomes the province of Us discussing Them in ways that no longer matter very much to Them.”<sup>89</sup> Elsewhere in his discussion of ‘epistophilia’ as a result of documentary conventions, Nichols states, “knowledge, as much or more, than the imaginary identification between a viewer and fictional character, promises the viewer a sense of plenitude or self-sufficiency.”<sup>90</sup> By the same token, what needs to be acknowledged in the conclusion of the discussion of Akerman’s and Delahaye’s work, are the *inert* subjects before the camera which are in part a product of historical and political circumstances, and in part a consequence of choices (and discourses) made by the *mobile* subjects.<sup>91</sup>

In one way, their choice is defined by the types of *inert* subjects that are to be discovered and mediated. On the other hand, what seems to characterize both Delahaye’s and Akerman’s impulse to access post-communist realities is the sense of loss combined with the desire to explore, to move through a foreign space convinced of the possibility to recover some sense of closure for themselves and the people they document. Although they set out on their journeys with different motivations and objectives (in Delahaye’s case it was a need for solitude<sup>92</sup>) the appropriation of space through which they move is first and foremost biographical with a clear, although unacknowledged, pretense on the social dimension of their discoveries. In Akerman’s case, specifically, the personal and the social side of the film emerge from “an aesthetic that uses the formal to complicate the discursive.”<sup>93</sup> Her framing, for instance, ensures that the viewers

never find out much about the people that are in the frame (or the director, for that matter), apart from the fact that they exist, caught in a state of inertia, resisting interpretation, or at best forcing the viewer to locate “their story” somewhere else: off-screen.

## CONCLUSION

Following the end of the Cold War, the “East Europeans,” it seemed, entered the visual field of the global media domains as either traumatized or disoriented. Whatever information exchange Marshall McLuhan might have tried to scale down to the notion of a ‘global village,’ post-1989 political and social realities inevitably forced real villages and villagers into the spotlight.<sup>94</sup> Building on the material symbols of these political changes with evocations of ‘the torn iron curtain’ or ‘the shattered wall,’ the global news media and creative industries relied on a register of visual tropes to categorically convey the experience of ‘the change.’ In the accepted East-West frame of reference, the disjuncture between the historical and the symbolic corresponded to the long tradition of the production and circulation of largely banal histories of Eastern Europe defined primarily by crises, violence, and backwardness.<sup>95</sup>

To paraphrase Milan Kundera, the perceived lack of diversity in Communist societies heralded their imminent demise, which rendered their sameness absolute.<sup>96</sup> Inevitably, the body of the individual, scarred either by political violence or poverty, served as a symbol for the decaying body of the ideology. The renewed geopolitical interest in Eastern Europe did not only emerge from the realm of diplomacy, but also as a dimension, or an effect, of entire populations embodied in media-generated symbols. If authoritarian ideologies thrived on the body as a symbol of many nations cemented into sameness, the global media more than readily accepted the concept of a block – faceless, identity-less – locked in an existential freeze frame. This is how both by the norms of authoritarian regimes and those of McLuhan’s ‘global village,’ a big

part of Europe's other half was perceived: nobodies became no-bodies. On the one extreme, countless working class women from the mining towns of rural Hungary, Slovakia, and Ukraine, fell victim to the exploits of the global sex economy. On the other, the media coverage of the Yugoslav wars centered on violated and abused bodies: burning villages and their inhabitants, convoys of survivors roaming the charred countryside, and the murdered with their faces buried in the mud.

By introducing and defining an analytical framing of mobile and inert subjects I've attempted to ground the discussion of post-communist space on the basis of visual evidence produced throughout the 1990s around specific terminology and a set of objectives. The framing itself attempts to challenge the dominant model of interpreting visual evidence that locates agency either with the spectator or within the images themselves. It make a case, instead, for a theoretical understanding of the visual that is grounded in practices and encounters between the *mobile* and *inert* subjects, and the way in which such encounters magnify and (re-) produce difference. This framing emphasizes that while such encounters are predominantly made visible in the discursive (media) space, they need to be traced to their actual locations, those in the realm of lived experience.

The selection of visual records discussed in the thesis foreground the image-producer (the *mobile* subject), who in order to discover and mediate the *inert* subject sets out on a journey with uncertain outcomes. By its end, the contemplation of other people's bodies and their positioning in space may inevitably lead to their own. In Chantal Akerman's case, distance as a formal element and an extension of her (dis-) location in spaces that she set out to explore is central to her record of Russia at a precarious moment in history. To what extent, or whether at all, Akerman's formal strategies and her position would be compromised in favor of a straight

forward argument if the subject of her film had been war or other forms of political violence is beyond the scope of this thesis.

At the same time, the visual record delivered by photojournalists in war zones raises *inert* subjects to a level of importance that from the spectator's ethical position requires acknowledgment of their suffering, at the very least. Looking at the body in the context of political violence, one wishes the physical suffering could be reduced to the size of the photographic frame that preserves it. At the same time, however, the privilege of contemplating the images of *inert* subjects has to be understood in relation to how consent, reciprocity, and access are negotiated in different documentary practices. Common visual analogies between different instances of violence, or specifically individual suffering, as the discussion of Yugoslav wars in this thesis illustrate, may obscure their social and political context. It is precisely for this reason that I've repeatedly emphasized the materiality of encounter between *mobile* and *inert* subjects. The concept of visual intervention acknowledges both discursive and material qualities of the encounter, and more importantly places abstract categories of academic inquiry in the realm of lived experience.

When faced with instances of violence and the responsibility to intervene, many image-producers in the war zone may not have the luxury of contemplation and self-reflexivity that is afforded to Akerman and Delahaye. Through the discussion of Haviv's and Perress' work I've illustrated that in those circumstances, too, the issues of space and subjectivity need to be taken into account. When analyzed through the conceptual framing of *mobile* and *inert* subjects, their work acknowledges the possibility of existing between different registers (as suggested by Mitchell and Pile) and thus holds the potential to capture differences and mobilize vision in a

way that would reflect back on the material aspects of production, the events, and their own anchoring in space and time.

In this thesis, I have defined visual interventions primarily around the different modes of documentary practice. By doing that, I've left out a wide array of other media formats and artistic practices from my discussion. It would be interesting to examine the utility of the *mobile/inert* subject configuration in the analysis of narrative films, video art, performance art, painting, graphic design, live video link-ups, and satellite reconnaissance. By bringing other media formats into the configuration of *mobile* and *inert* subject, one might be able to define the forms of interaction between the image-producers and their audience that don't necessarily depend on the image. As already mentioned during the discussion of my cases, the space in which the images are presented determines to a large degree how they will be perceived. Perres' and Delahaye's work has entered the spaces of museum and art gallery, inviting the visitors to engage with the exhibits by recording their reactions on video or in writing.<sup>97</sup>

In this thesis, I did not attempt to examine the role of the local image-producers.<sup>98</sup> The local productions during the Bosnian war specifically were limited in quality and content. Short narrative and documentary films were shot mostly in *vérité*-style on rudimentary video equipment, with minimal lighting and sound recording abilities. In the rare instances when excerpts from the work of the local image-producers were incorporated into news segments on major international news channels, their shock value (i.e. scenes from the Markale massacre, victims of sniper fire and mortar attacks in Sarajevo, Tuzla, and Mostar) seemed to be the primary criterion for selection. This footage of disparate and unrelated events was frequently juxtaposed into a uniform image of the war, with their authors rarely credited. It is also for this reason that I have avoided the discussion of local image-producers, since their intentions and

motivations for producing video about the war did not match the context in which they were broadcast abroad. The local photographers and filmmakers had ultimately little control in shaping the context in which their material was used. Hoping that major international news channel would give their advocacy exposure to a much wider audience, the kind of intervention these filmmakers were hoping to achieve was entirely lost on the international news outlets, which frequently (mis-) appropriated their footage for a very general reporting about the war.<sup>99</sup>

The *mobile/inert* subject configuration is by no means definitive. I have used it as a way to open new venues for discussions about subjects, spaces, and subjectivity in documentary practice. Having said that, I don't take the *inert* subject to be merely an effect of discourses. To settle on such a category for the convenience of expounding obvious differences, would amount to mistaking the value of analytical categories for how well they confirm my own assumptions and prejudices. My attempt to define the terms and effects of the *mobile/inert* subjects encounters around the categories of positionality, mobility, and visibility was intended to bring both the *inert* and *mobile* subject into the field of vision and to present competing range of objectives and priorities with which to interpret the visual evidence from 1990s. Once again, the *mobile/inert* configuration that I define in this thesis is supported by specific relations at specific time and places. Therefore, a mapping of the configuration onto other instances of collapsing states might produce a different discussion and set of conclusions from the ones that I articulate here.

In today's increasingly complex and unpredictable global system of information exchange, instances of political and structural violence are frequently dislodged from the local contexts. The potency of visual media to generate "contexts that produce authoritative versions of the different spatial mappings upon which we base our vision of global conditions"<sup>100</sup> needs



therefore to be address against the background of global flows involving media, capital, and people. These flows remind us that subjectivities are both positioned and enabled through different global configurations.<sup>101</sup> If there is a utility of the *mobile/inert* analytical concept in engaging with other instances of state collapses around the world (past and present), my definition of visual interventions could also be debated in singular, as visual intervention. What I am suggesting is that visual intervention could be contextualized as a separate strand of intervention alongside the military and humanitarian kind. As I have illustrated in my discussion, the body of visual interventions in the Bosnian war has had an obvious political utility in how it construed suffering to elicit a sense of obligation to intervene both militarily and through humanitarian means. The possibilities of experience, agency, and discourse through which visual intervention, with its own regime of operations and legitimacy, could be theorized are certainly there.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> “The Wall Project,” *Wende Museum*, accessed June 13, 2014, <http://www.wendemuseum.org/programs/wall-project>

<sup>2</sup> Katja Petrowskaja, “Interview with Cynthia Beatt,” October 29, 2009, <http://www.invisible-frame.com/en/the-film/interview/>

<sup>3</sup> For a representative sample of responses see: David Hayes, “1989: moment, legacy, future.” *Open Democracy*, 2 November, 2009, <http://www.opendemocracy.net/david-hayes/1989-moment-legacy-future> (accessed June 13th, 2014). A more case-specific collection of responses from scholars and writers from the former Yugoslavia is found in Ivan Čolović, ed. (2009) *Zid je mrtav, živeli zidovi! Pad Berlinskog zida i raspad Jugoslavije*. Beograd: Biblioteka XX Vek. See also Forrester (eds.), 2004.

<sup>4</sup> The term visual intervention can mean many things, and there is no doubt that, in the context of post-communist space, one could contextualize visual alongside military and humanitarian interventions. In fact, visual interventions in the Yugoslav wars, the siege of Sarajevo as a case in point, had an obvious political utility for how it construed suffering in an attempt to elicit a sense of obligation to intervene both militarily and through humanitarian actions. In regards to news media see Gow et.al 1996; also Martin Bell, *In Harm's Way* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1995), 142-145.

<sup>5</sup> The various needs of journalist in the besieged Sarajevo is a case in point (from means of transport and communication, to lodging, gear, fixers and translators). Ironically, in many of their accounts journalist complain of hunger, cold and other things that they felt made them like the residents of the besieged city. See Bell, *In Harm's Way*, 113-114, 127; also Janine di Giovanni, *The quick and the dead: under siege in Sarajevo* London: Phoenix House, 1995), 64.

<sup>6</sup> See John Taylor, *Body Horror: Photojournalism, Catastrophe, and War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998).

<sup>7</sup> When discussing distinctions between inert and mobile subjects we need to keep in mind many facets of subjectivity, such as nationality, gender, age, class, race, and sexuality. Different aspects of subjectivity interact in multiple and contingent ways. Ethnicity is always bound up with other dimensions of subjectivity (with gender, for instance).

<sup>8</sup> See Borcila, 2004, 2009; Žarkov, 2007.

<sup>9</sup> Susan Woodward, “Violence-Prone Area or International Transition?: Adding the Role of Outsiders in Balkan Violence,” in *Violence and Subjectivity*, ed. by Veena Das, et al. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

<sup>10</sup> The end of the Cold War was followed up by eruption and exacerbation of violence in many more places than just the former Yugoslavia (Rwanda, Chechnya, Sierra Leone, Somalia, are just some of the many examples).

<sup>11</sup> Allen Feldman, “Violence and Vision: The Prosthetics and Aesthetics of Terror,” in *Violence and Subjectivity*, ed. Veena Das et al. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 53.

<sup>12</sup> See Katherine Verdery, *The Political Lives of Dead Bodies* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000); Judith Butler, *Frames of War* (London: Verso, 2009) and *Precarious Lives: The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (London: Verso, 2006); see also Scarry, 1987.

<sup>13</sup> The repercussions of such thinking on America's foreign policy are discussed in Gerard Ó Tuathail, *Critical Geopolitics* (University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 148-176.

<sup>14</sup> See Taylor, *Body Horror*.

- <sup>15</sup> Gillian Rose, *Feminism and Geography: The Limits of Geographical Knowledge* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 160.
- <sup>16</sup> Robyn Longhurst, "Placing Subjectivities," in *The Handbook of Cultural Geography*, ed. by Kay Anderson et al. (London: Sage, 2003), 286.
- <sup>17</sup> Steven Pile and Nigel Thrift, "Mapping the Subject," in *Mapping the Subject: Geographies of Cultural Transformation*, ed. by Steven Pile and Nigel Thrift (New York: Routledge, 1995), 41.
- <sup>18</sup> Tim Cresswell, *On the Move: Mobility in the Modern Western World* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 6.
- <sup>19</sup> Cresswell, *On the Move*, 4.
- <sup>20</sup> See the 2013 special issue of *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* edited by Schiller and Salazar for the most recent trends in scholarship on these themes.
- <sup>21</sup> Nina G. Schiller and Noel B. Salazar, "Regimes of Mobility Across the Globe," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 39:2 (2013): 188.
- <sup>22</sup> Pile and Thrift, *Mapping the Subject*, 373.
- <sup>23</sup> Andaluna Borcila, "How I Found Eastern Europe: Televisual Geography, Travel Sites, and Museum Installations," in *Over the Wall/After the Fall: Post-Communist Cultures through an East-West Gaze*, ed. Forrester et al. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 57.
- <sup>24</sup> See Dinitia Smith, "Chantal Akerman and the point of view," *New York Times*, April 26, 1998, accessed June 27, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/1998/04/26/movies/film-chantal-akerman-and-the-point-of-view.html>.
- <sup>25</sup> As indicated earlier, in the Yugoslav case at least, the image-producers frequently worked alongside a corpus of humanitarian workers, peace keepers, and foreign diplomats. See Warren P. Strobel, *Late Breaking Foreign Policy: The News Media Influence on Peace Operations* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Institute of Peace Press, 1997), 105-115.
- <sup>26</sup> Dai Vaughan. *For Documentary: Twelve Essays* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 66.
- <sup>27</sup> This is reminiscent of Ronald Barthes' critique of images: "the more technology develops diffusion of information (and most notably of images), the more it provides the means of masking the constructed meaning under the appearance of the given meaning." In *Image, Music, Text* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978), 46.
- <sup>28</sup> For key feminist approaches to visual culture see Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," in *Visual and Other Pleasures* (London: Macmillan, 1989); Griselda Pollock, "The Visual," in *A Concise Companion to Feminist Theory*, ed. Mary Eagleton (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), 173-194.
- <sup>29</sup> This is the primary concern of the still emerging field of visual culture. For relevant debates within the field see Nicholas Mirzoeff, ed., *The Visual Culture Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2002).
- <sup>30</sup> W. J. T. Mitchell, *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1994), 16.
- <sup>31</sup> Jessica Evans and Stuart Hall, eds., *Visual Culture: The Reader* (London: Sage, 1999), 5.
- <sup>32</sup> Mirzoeff articulates this definition primarily in respect to the spectator. *The Visual Culture Reader*, 10.
- <sup>33</sup> Das, et al., 1997; Greenhouse, et al., 2002.

<sup>34</sup> Haviv's photographs from Bosnia are credited, albeit wrongly, as being the first "documented evidence of atrocities occurring in the region." See Joshua Lipton, "Ron Haviv: shooting war," *Columbia Journalism Review* 41 (2002): 48.

<sup>35</sup> In Ron Haviv, *Blood and Honey: a Balkan war journal* (New York: TV Books, 2000), 21.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>37</sup> Taylor, *Body Horror*, 35.

<sup>38</sup> Borcila, "How I Found Eastern Europe," 44.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 51.

<sup>40</sup> Barbie Zelizer, *Remembering to Forget: Holocaust Memory through the Camera's Eye* (Chicago: University Press of Chicago, 1998), 226 – 232.

<sup>41</sup> Taylor, *Body Horror*, 20.

<sup>42</sup> Gow, et al, *Bosnia by Television*, 6.

<sup>43</sup> Veena Das, "The Act Of Witnessing: Violence, Poisounous Knowledge, and Subjectivity," in *Violence and Subjectivity*, ed. Veena Das et al. (Berkley: University of California Press, 2000), 208.

<sup>44</sup> See David Rieff, *Bed For the Night: humanitarianism in crisis* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2002), 3; 128-129. Bell, *In Harm's Way*, 135-145.

<sup>45</sup> It is unclear whether Peress, who at the time was working for Magnum Photos, went to Bosnia on his own accord or on a commissioned assignment. It important to keep in mind the nature of assignment the photojournalists accept to pursue. Whether they go places as freelancers or on assignments commissioned by photo agencies and/or art galleries will in large measure determine both the format and the quality of their final work.

<sup>46</sup> For a detailed review of the exhibit see Kenneth Baker, "' Farewell to Bosnia ' -- Images of a Hellish War," *San Francisco Chronicle*, Sept. 6, 1994; Vicki Goldberg, "Photography View; Where Does Viewer Discretion Begin?" *New York Times*, 17 Apr. 1994. For Peress' other photographic work on Bosnia and Kosovo see Eric Stover and Gilles Peress, *The Graves: Srebrenica and Vukovar* (New York: Scalo, 1998); Fred Abrahams, Gilles Peress, and Eric Stover *A Village Destroyed, May 14, 1999: War Crimes in Kosovo* (Berkley: University of California Press, 2001).

<sup>47</sup> Goldberg, "Photography View; Where Does Viewer Discretion Begin?"

<sup>48</sup> Kenneth Baker "' Farewell to Bosnia ' -- Images of a Hellish War."

<sup>49</sup> Francois Debrix, "Post-Mortem Photography: Gilles Peress and the Taxonomy of Death," in *Postmodern Culture*, Volume 9, Number 2, January 1999.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Carole Kismaric and Gilles Peress, "Gilles Peress." *BOMB*. 59 (1997): 32.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> For a review of relevant literature see Safia Swimelar, "Making Human Rights Visible Through Photography and Film," in *Sage Handbook of Human Rights*, ed. Mark Gibney and Anja Mihr (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, forthcoming)

<sup>54</sup> Susan Lindfield, *The Cruel Radiance: Photography and Political Violence* (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 2012), 39.

<sup>55</sup> Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 21.

<sup>56</sup> See Sharon Sliwinski, *Human Rights in Camera* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2011); Lynn Hunt, *Inventing Human Rights: A History* (New York: Norton, 2007).

<sup>57</sup> The visual interventions during the Bosnian war add a new dimension to the contemporary discussions of globalization of witnessing and the universality of suffering. And while the scholars that I reference here insist that images of individualized suffering can create empathy, at the same time, those images can seem far removed from the viewers' realities. As a consequence, the viewers may not be able to identify at all with the victims or the suffering represented. Empathy does not always result in a move to action, and scholars have criticized atrocity images for generating indifference and pity rather than empathy, or action. The media narrative of the wars in the Balkans may very well be an example of this.

<sup>58</sup> Bill Nichols, "'Getting to Know You ...': Knowledge, Power, and the Body," in *Theorizing Documentary*, ed. by Michael Renov (New York: Routledge, 1993), 180.

<sup>59</sup> Here again I would like to emphasize Rose's earlier definition of space as "insecure, precarious and fluctuating"

<sup>60</sup> Michael Tarantino, "The Moving Eye: Notes on the Films of Chantal Akerman," in *Bordering on fiction: Chantal Akerman's D'Est* (Minneapolis: Walker Art Center, 1995).

<sup>61</sup> Nichols asserts that "documentaries take shape around an information logic. The economy of this logic requires a representation, case, or argument about the historical world. The economy is basically instrumental and pragmatic: it operates in terms of problem solving." In other words 'the documentary logic' is bound to rely on "evidence, evidentiary editing, and the construction of an argument." In Bill Nichols, *Representing Reality* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 18-24.

<sup>62</sup> Catherine Russell, *Experimental Ethnography* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), 190.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid, 169.

<sup>64</sup> Nichols, *Representing Reality*, 4.

<sup>65</sup> Russell, *Experimental Ethnography*, 24.

<sup>66</sup> Lieve Spaas, "Chantal Akerman: a struggle with exile," in *Cultures of Exile: Visual Dimensions of Displacement*, ed. Wendy Everett and Peter Wagstaff (New York: Berghahn Books, 2004), 92.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Akerman quoted in Ivone Margulies, *Nothing Happens: Chantal Akerman's hyperrealist everyday* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996), 201.

<sup>69</sup> Russell, *Experimental Ethnography*, 165.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid, 63.

<sup>71</sup> See Chantal Akerman, "On *D'est*," in *Bordering on fiction: Chantal Akerman's D'Est* (Minneapolis: Walker Art Center, 1995).

<sup>72</sup> Bill Nichols, *Blurred Boundaries: questions of meaning in contemporary culture* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 68-69.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid, 68.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Bill Nichols, “ ‘Getting to Know You ...’: Knowledge, Power, and the Body,” in *Theorizing Documentary*, ed. by Michael Renov, 174 – 191. New York: Routledge, 1993.

<sup>76</sup> Pile and Thrift, *Mapping the Subject*, 48.

<sup>77</sup> Peter Lenon. “The big picture.” *Guardian*, January 31, 2004. Accessed April 22, 2014.  
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/artanddesign/2004/jan/31/photography>

<sup>78</sup> For many years, Luc Delahaye worked as a photojournalist for the renowned French photo agency, Magnum Photos. He covered most major conflicts since the mid-80s, including the wars in the former Yugoslavia. Some of his work on Bosnia can be found in Cohen (1998) and in a separate monograph *Mémo* (1997). In 1992 Delahaye was awarded the World Press Photo Prize for his controversial picture of the severely wounded Biljana Vrhovac in the early days of the Sarajevo siege. For a compelling meditation on the legacy of his photograph, see Jasmila Žbanić’s short documentary *Sljeka s ugla* (Images from the Corner). Also, for an account of Delahaye and Haviv’s short captivity while on assignment in northern Bosnia, see Roger Cohen “In Bosnia, the War That Can’t Be Seen.” *New York Times*, December 25, 1994, p.4.

<sup>79</sup> It appears that Delahaye’s journey had not been commissioned by a photo agency. For the purposes of my discussion, I categorize this specific series as an independent production.

<sup>80</sup> The title of the book, too, alludes to another landmark in the romanticist tradition, Franz Schubert’s song cycle *Winterreise* from 1882.

<sup>81</sup> “I would sit for hours with an interpreter, silent, observing. I was always there, up to the moment, and even beyond the moment, when it was decent to be there,” quoted in Lennon, “Big Picture.”

<sup>82</sup> Lennon, “Big Picture.” See also Jörg Colberg “A Conversation with Luc Delahaye,” *American Photo*, December 9, 2008. Accessed April 24, 2014. <http://www.popphoto.com/photos/2008/12/conversation-luc-delahaye>

<sup>83</sup> Martha Rosler, *Decoys and Disruptions: Selected Writings, 1975-2001* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2004), 180.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 211.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 226.

<sup>86</sup> Pile and Thrift, *Mapping the Subject*, 46.

<sup>87</sup> Prior to this point in the series, the photographed encounters on Delahey’s journey raise to visibility (and transparency) all sorts of bodies, except for that of the photographer. He remains invisible.

<sup>88</sup> Pile and Thrift, *Mapping the Subject*, 380.

<sup>89</sup> Nichols, “ ‘Getting to Know You ...,’” 183.

<sup>90</sup> Nichols, *Representing Reality*, 31.

<sup>91</sup> This takes us back to the core of Rosler’s critique of documentary practice. She insists on acknowledging the ways in which different subjects become enmeshed into their own histories and geographies, each being a product of intersecting power/knowledge relationships.

<sup>92</sup> Amy Serafin. “Russia in Winter: Bleak, Desperate, Beautiful,” *New York Times*, February 11, 2001, p. 39.

<sup>93</sup> Christine Butler, "Bordering on Fiction: Chantal Akerman's *From the East*," in *Identity and memory: the films of Chantal Akerman*, ed. by Gwendolyn Foster (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2003), 162.

<sup>94</sup> This brings to mind Dubravka Ugrešić lamenting that technology has made people casual about the war in the former Yugoslavia. She observes that in the newspaper and on the TV death and unhappiness is relegated to the realm of "provincial spectacle" or a "little village event" the more it appears genuine. See Dubravka Ugrešić, *Nobody's Home* (London: Telegram Books, 2007).

<sup>95</sup> See Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994).

<sup>96</sup> Milan Kundera, *The Curtain: An Essay in Seven Parts* (New York: Harper Collins, 2007).

<sup>97</sup> *Farewell to Bosnia* is also available as part of a web project that showcases documentary photography. The curators have embedded Peress' images into the text from his collection, presenting an interesting way for the online visitors to explore the images in conjunction with text, rather than relying only on the captions that typically accompany it (<http://www.picture-projects.com/bosnia.html>). Peress has also expressed his hope that museums may be the basis for another kind of community, where ideas can be exchanged and different set of responses to contemporary social and political issues articulated. See Goldberg. "Photography View; Where Does Viewer Discretion Begin?"

<sup>98</sup> See the output of the Sarajevo-based SaGA production company. The majority of short films and documentaries made during the siege of Sarajevo has been released on 2 DVD sets: *SaGa About Sarajevo* and *Street Under the Siege*. A good portion of these works can be viewed here: <http://vimeo.com/iarnautalic/videos/page:1/sort:newest>; See also Howard Rosenberg "Filmmakers Capture War TV Forgot," Los Angeles Times, December 20, 1993. Accessed May 6, 2014. [http://articles.latimes.com/1993-12-20/entertainment/ca-3860\\_1\\_tv-war-filmmakers](http://articles.latimes.com/1993-12-20/entertainment/ca-3860_1_tv-war-filmmakers)

<sup>99</sup> Gow, et al., *Bosnia by Television*

<sup>100</sup> Das, et. al, *Violence and Subjectivity*, 4.

<sup>101</sup> See Appadurai's discussion of five global *scapes* in Arju Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).

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